

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:256

ANSWERED ON:31.07.2002

COMPANY FREEBIES INFLUENCE DOCTORS PRESCRIPTION

SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned `company freebies influence doctors` prescription` appearing in the Times of India dated June 1, 2002;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) how the Government propose to regulate such tendencies on the part of the pharmaceutical companies to influence the doctors in prescribing drugs which have not been fully tested elsewhere?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA)

(a) to (c) : A statement is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 256 FOR ANSWER ON 31.7.2002

No specific instance of the inducements being offered to medical professionals for pushing the sale of drugs has been brought to the notice of the Government. As regards the reported news item `India has become a testing ground for experimental drugs and there has been a 400 percent increase in the filing frequency of Investigational New Drugs (IND) with the Drug Controller General of India during 1999-2000` it may be stated that most of the applications received in the office of the DCG(I) are for drugs already approved and marketed in other countries. These are not investigational new Drugs and only confirmatory clinical trials are to be conducted as per the requirements of Schedule Y of the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules. These can not be considered as testing grounds for experimental drugs as alleged in the news item. Only seven IND applications have been submitted by the Indian Pharmaceutical industry since 1999.

As per Pharmaceutical Policy 2002 announced by Government of India, the objective is to encourage indigenous endeavors in pharma R&D through appropriate fiscal incentives etc. Any act of accepting or soliciting gifts or other inducements by the doctors for prescribing drugs which have not been fully tested elsewhere; or contravention of the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and the regulations made thereunder, would be construed as unethical or an act of misconduct under the provisions of the Indian Medical Council (Professional conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002. Under the above Regulations, Chapter-8 provides for punishment and disciplinary action which can be taken against doctors contravening the provisions of the regulations. If specific complaints are brought up before the Medical Council of India, the same shall be referred to the State Medical Council concerned with which the doctor is registered or in case of those directly registered with Medical Council of India, action will be taken by the Ethical Committee of the Council after necessary inquiries.